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RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
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SUBJECT: NRC: RUSSIA AND ALLIES WORLDS APART ON BOSNIA

Classified By: Ambassador Victoria Nuland for reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

11. (C) SUMMARY: In a November 28 NATO-Russia Council (NRC) discussion of the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the head of the Russian MFA's Third European Department, Vadim Gorelov, appeared as a surprise guest speaker and accused High Representative Lajcak of "misusing" the Bonn powers to further European integration. He called for the Office of the High Representative (OHR) to "wind down" by June 2008. Standing united, Allies fully supported Lajcak, rejected any link between Bosnia and Kosovo, and chastised Russia for its role in emboldening the Bosnian Serbs. Ambassador Nuland called Russian encouragement of Bosnian Serb leadership dangerous and urged Russia to use its influence to compel Republika Srpska Prime Minister Milorad Dodik to cooperate with the High Rep. END SUMMARY

Surprise Guest Attacks Lajcak

12. (C) At the November 28 meeting of NATO-Russia Council Ambassadors, surprise Russian guest speaker Vadim Gorelov, head of the MFA's Third European Department, brutally attacked High Representative Lajcak, calling him a "culprit" whose abuse of Bonn powers was making Bosnia more unstable. He claimed that Lajcak had failed to consult with Bosnian authorities and the Peace Implementation Council concerning his plans. Arguing that external dependence was the source of all Bosnia's troubles, he accused "NRC Partners" of allowing Lajcak to use the principles of Dayton to subjugate Bosnia to European integration criteria and force Bosnia to accept EU principles. Gorelov said that the mandate of the Office of the High Representative should be ended by June 2008, asserting that "guardianship is a thing of the past." Clearly annoyed by the Russian breach of protocol, NATO Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer cut short Gorelov's

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long-winded intervention. (Note: Russian DCM Soltanovskiy later told us that Gorelov's participation was also a surprise for the Russian mission.)

Allies Defend Lajcak; Criticize Russia

13. (C) Allies rebutted all of the Russian accusations. Ambassador Nuland said Lajcak did not operate in a vacuum and consulted extensively with the Bosnian authorities in an

attempt to hold the state institutions together, allowing Bosnia to get back on its feet. Germany argued that Lajcak was acting fully in line with the Dayton Accord. France called for unity in the international community to monitor the Dayton principles. Hungary said European integration was the engine of reform in the Western Balkans. Italy, Norway, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia also intervened to vigorously defend Lajcak.

¶4. (C) Allies criticized Russia directly and indirectly for encouraging the Bosnian Serbs, intransigence. Norway called outside meddling unwelcome, while Canada pointed out that Russian statements challenging the authority of the OHR had not helped the situation. Condemning Russia for meddling in "Europe's backyard," the Netherlands argued that Russia's criticism of Lajcak undermined stability in Bosnia. Ambassador Nuland called Russian encouragement of Bosnian Serb leadership dangerous, adding that Moscow should be using its influence with Republika Srpska Prime Minister Milorad Dodik to urge his cooperation with the OHR.

Russia Plays the Kosovo Card

¶5. (C) While trying to avoid directly linking the two situations, Russia said Lajcak's actions were motivated by fear of the "Kosovo effect." Turkey, Germany, France, the Czech Republic, Canada, and Slovakia all stated definitively that there was no link between the situation in Bosnia and the one in Kosovo.

NULAND